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THE NEW USSR DRUG PENTOXYL

Prof N. Lazarev, V. Beyer, K. Khilov
Sci Assoc G. Felistovich

Metacil (4-methyl-uracil), the USSR drug which was synthesized by R. S. Karlinskaya under the direction of N. V. Khromov-Borisov, has a pronounced capacity to increase the production of leukocytes, particularly granulocytes, in the animal organism.

This effect of metacil was particularly noticeable in experiments in which leukopenia had been brought about previously as a result of the action of benzene, exposure to X-rays, or by some other method. Clinical investigation demonstrated the effectiveness of this drug in treating various types of leukopenia, e.g., agranulocytary anginas of unknown origin or leukopenic conditions resulting after X-ray therapy of malignant tumors. Metacyl, as distinguished from stimulants of leukopoiesis used previously, is effective on peroral administration and has a low toxicity. A new, therapeutically more effective drug which is chemically related to metacil and also stimulates leukopoiesis was synthesized after the introduction of metacil.

The new drug, which was named pentoxyl, is a white crystalline powder having a bitter flavor and exerting a slightly irritating effect on the mucous membranes of the mouth. It does not produce any harmful side effects. Mice survive a single administration in the course of which 10 mg per kg of weight are introduced into the stomach. Feeding to rabbits of 700-800 mg of pentoxyl per day during 3-4 weeks does not impair the increase in weight and does not have any noticeable toxic effects.

Clinical investigation of pentoxyl showed that this drug has a beneficial action in various leukopenic conditions, agranulocytary angina of unknown etiology, alimentary-toxic aleukia, chronic effects of benzene, and some agranulocytoses caused by drugs.

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Particularly effective is the treatment with pentoxyl (in combination with penicillin) of agranulocytary angina of unknown etiology, a disease which was regarded as incurable hitherto. Even in the most difficult cases, when changes in the blood were characterized not only by leukopenia and agranulocytosis, but a syndrome of hemorrhagic aleukia, ahemoblastosis, and beginning reticulo-endoteliosis were also present, a positive effect was obtained.

When 0.2-0.3 g of pentoxyl were given three times a day, there was improvement of the blood composition, as well as of the general condition of patients as early as 2-3 days after treatment had been started. Continued improvement of the blood condition was observed after the drug was withdrawn.

In alimentary-toxic aleukia, a good therapeutic effect was obtained by administering 0.2 g three times a day. As early as the second or third day, the number of leukocytes in the blood was increased, primarily at the expense of granulocytes.

In many cases, increases of leukopoiesis, and particularly of the formation of granulocytes, take place, notwithstanding continued action of the harmful agent producing agranulocytosis and leukopenia.

Clinical observations on the action of pentoxyl are being continued. One may expect that this drug will be effective in secondary anemias of various types. Improvement of the condition of the blood was already observed when pentoxyl was administered in some cases of aplastic anemia.

As a result of collective work done by USSR scientists, an original, new synthetic drug was created which does not correspond to any analogous substance developed abroad.

General use of pentoxyl in medical practice has been authorized by the pharmacological committee of the Scientific Medical Council, Ministry of Public Health USSR. It is already being released by the industry.

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